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FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

SETTLEMENT OF ALONZO HILL, D.D.

WORCESTER, MARCH 28, 1867.

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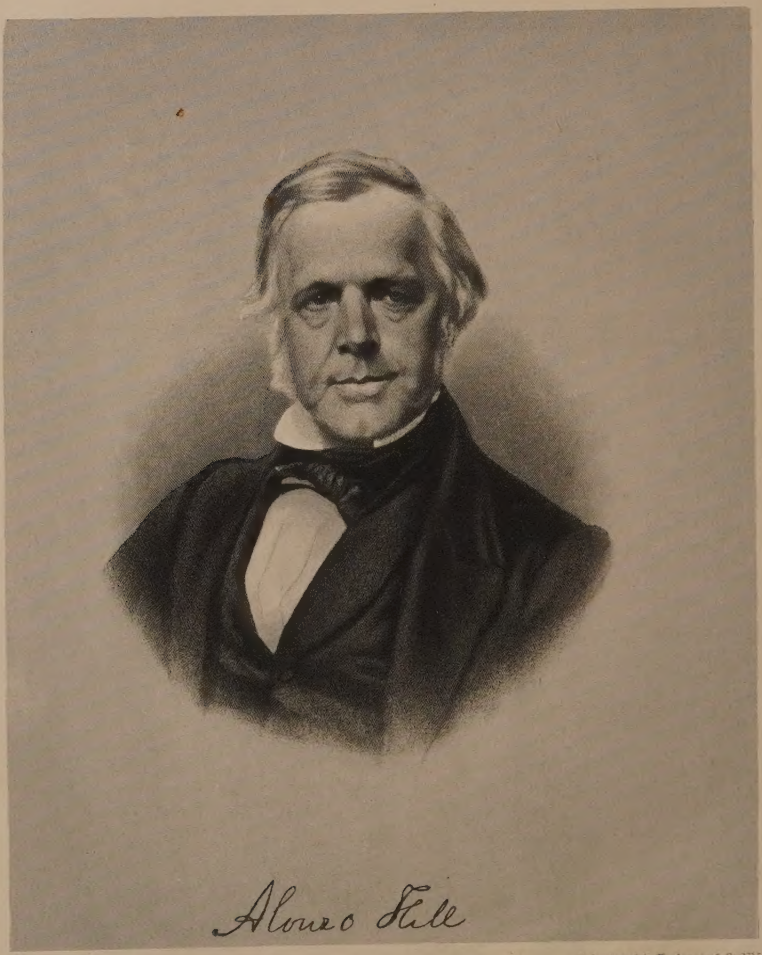

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THE PASTOR'S RECORD:

A SERMON

PREACHED MARCH 28, 1867, BEFORE THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN WORCESTER,

ON THE

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF HIS SETTLEMENT.

By ALONZO HILL.

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXERCISES ON THAT OCCASION.

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WORCESTER, April 2, 1867.

Rev. Dr. HILL.

DEAR SIR, — At a Special Meeting of the members of the Second Parish, held after the close of the morning services on Sunday, 31st ultimo, the following votes were unanimously adopted: —

Voted, That the thanks of the Society be expressed to Rev. Dr. Hill for the interesting, instructive, and eloquent Discourse delivered by him on the 28th inst., in commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of his settlement as Pastor of this Parish; and that a copy of his Discourse be requested for publication with the other proceedings of the day.

Voted, That a committee of five members of the Parish be appointed to communicate the above vote to Rev. Dr. Hill, and, with his permission, to take measures for the publication of his Discourse, with the other proceedings.

The Committee appointed at this meeting are happy to request you to comply with the wishes of the Parish, by furnishing a copy of your Discourse for publication.

We remain, with the greatest respect, your friends and parishioners,

JOHN W. WETHERELL.
T. W. WELLINGTON.
H. C. RICE.
LEWIS BARNARD.
STEPHEN SALISBURY, JR.

LINCOLN STREET, April 3, 1867.

GENTLEMEN, — The wishes of the members of the Second Parish, with whom I have been so long and tenderly connected, have with me the force of a command. Their desire, communicated through you, to possess a copy of my Discourse, preached on the Fortieth Anniversary of my Ordination, compels my cheerful acquiescence, all the more because it will remind us and our children of one of the happiest days which we have been permitted to spend together. I very cordially yield it for publication.

Very affectionately, your pastor and friend,

ALONZO HILL.

JOHN W. WETHERELL,
T. W. WELLINGTON,
H. C. RICE,
LEWIS BARNARD, and
STEPHEN SALISBURY, Jr., Esqs.

CONTENTS.

Order of Exercises in the Church.

PAGE

Letter of Committee 5

Reply of Dr. Hill 5

Order of Exercises in the Church 11

Sermon by Rev. Dr. Alonzo Hill 13

Testimonial accompanying Gift to Dr. Hill 42

Proceedings in the Vestry.

Remarks of Hon. Stephen Salisbury 47

" " Hon. Phinehas Ball 48

" " Rev. Dr. Hill 49

" " Rev. George M. Bartol 51

" " Rev. Rush R. Shippen 52

Letter from Rev. E. E. Hale 53

Remarks of Hon. Henry Chapin 54

Letter from Governor Alex. H. Bullock 56

Remarks of Hon. Emory Washburn 57

" " Rev. Dr. Chandler Robbins 60

" " Rev. Dr. Seth Sweetser 61

" " Rev. Merril Richardson 63

" " Rev. Wm. R. Huntington 63

" " Rev. B. F. Bowles 65

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

DR. HILL . . . . . *Frontispiece*

DR. BANCROFT 21

FIRST MEETING-HOUSE 26

SECOND MEETING-HOUSE 26

PRESENT CHURCH 46

EXERCISES IN THE CHURCH.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

Voluntary on the Organ.

ANTHEM.

INVOCATION, AND READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

By the Rev. R R. Shippen.

PRAYER.

By the Rev. Dr. James W. Thompson.

HYMN.

O years gone down into the past;
What pleasant memories come to me,
Of our untroubled days of peace,
And hours of almost ecstasy!

Yet would I have no moon stand still,
Where life's most pleasant valleys lie;
Nor wheel the planet of the day
Back on his pathway through the sky.

In spite of many broken dreams,
This have I truly learned to say, —
Prayers which I thought unanswered once
Were answered in God's own best way.

And though some hopes I cherished once,
Perished untimely in their birth,
Yet have I been beloved and blest
Beyond the measure of my worth.

Phœbe Carey.

SERMON.

By the Rev. Dr. Hill.

PRAYER.

By the Rev. Dr. Chandler Robbins.

ANTHEM.

BENEDICTION.

THE PASTOR'S RECORD.

"THE LORD THY GOD HATH BLESSED THEE IN ALL THE WORKS OF THY HAND: HE KNOWETH THY WALKING THROUGH THIS GREAT WILDERNESS: THESE FORTY YEARS THE LORD THY GOD HATH BEEN WITH THEE: THOU HAST LACKED NOTHING."—Deut. ii. 7.

FORTY years ago to-day, I was ordained the junior minister of this congregation. To-day I complete a ministry of forty years. A whole generation and a third have come and gone, and I have been spared. I have been with you more than half of the whole allotted period of human life, and our very globe has been unpeopled and peopled anew. The children *then* have passed on to middle age; the active then, who were the strength of the society, have become old, few, and feeble; the old then have gone the way of their fathers, and I am with you still. I was then the youngest of your ministers, fresh from the schools, inexperienced, uncertain of the issue of our common enterprise. I am now by ten years the oldest, having survived thirty-five pastors, exclusive of the Methodists, who have been settled and then have gone from the different Protestant congregations in this city; and now I still linger, with the accumulated labor and experience of forty years. I was then frail of body and broken in health, with no expectation of a long continuance of our union. Now, at the end of this long period of time, I stand before you to record the

good hand of God who has led me over the great wilderness, spread more with blooming oases and refreshing fountains than with drifting sands, and that I have come to this hour with so little conscious decay, unwearied and unworn by the length of the way. Who has such cause to lift up the heart in unaffected gratitude to the Ordainer of our lot? and how can I better begin this discourse than by the profound acknowledgment of mercies which have been unbounded, and of obligations which no language can fitly express? "Thou, Lord, hast known my walking through the great wilderness. Thou hast been with me, and I have lacked nothing. Therefore would I praise and bless thee; and when I forget thine unceasing, unchanging goodness to me and mine, let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"

I am glad and grateful to the good God who has not only spared me, but cast my lot on times so rich in the manifestation of his goodness and in stirring and uplifting influences which call forth the intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers of man. The world's progress is not made through a calm, sluggish flow of events, but by its grand and soul-stirring eras, the periods of mighty discovery, of mental struggle and moral revolution, when heaven and earth seem to conspire to help the weakness of men, new agencies are called into being, new powers bestowed, new motives supplied, new energies summoned, — periods worth whole centuries of dull, listless existence. Then the world takes another leap in its career of accomplishment, and its achievements are recorded in history, and it becomes the teacher and inspirer of after-generations. Just such times I would choose for the life-work given me to do; for how wonderful, how quickening, how soul-enkindling they have been! What stir of the faculties, what momentous revelations, what magnificent inventions and discoveries, have been made within these last forty years! We seem to

be in the condition of those who survived the incoming and marked the effects of the great flood. There was the drift, the sand, and the seaweed, the dismantled works and broken traditions of the antediluvian world; but there was also the greenness and fertility and fresh promise of the new. A new lease of life has been given, and more is now accomplished in a single revolution of the sun than in a lifetime of ordinary existence. Think what has been done for the multiplication of the comforts of man. Nature has disclosed her secrets in ten thousand ways to his knowledge, and laid before him her subtlest powers for his uses. Within this period, the wonderful energy of steam and the strange mystery of the telegraph have revolutionized his travel and his intercourse, the affairs of his business and the work of his hands. No longer depending on wind and tide, he has learned to cross oceans and continents in days no more than the weeks which he had before occupied. In an instant he will communicate with his friends a thousand miles away, and at the breakfast-table be familiar with events, in every capital in Europe, which occurred not more than an hour before. And how have these great discoveries lightened his labors and multiplied his pleasures! They have increased tenfold the fabrics of his skill and the products of his workshops. The triumphs of inventive genius, the wonders of ether and of photographic achievement, have all been the gift of the last forty years.

Then call to mind the advances in knowledge, — the quickening of the intellect and the expansion of the mind almost into infinitude which have been made within this period, bringing to light a series of wonderful facts, and establishing a new science. Before, men had scanned the heavens and the earth for proofs of creative skill: but now they have gone under the earth to its rocky foundations, and read there in strange characters its great history, reaching for millions of years beyond our written records, and supplying the argu-

ment anew in proof of the miraculous interpositions of God; throwing a new light on the origin and wanderings of man, the mysteries of his being, his works, and his destination.

Within these forty years, there have been revolutions in states and in empires, the boundaries of nations have been more than once changed, the weak have become strong and the strong weak, and ancient kingdoms, with a bright history and a name to live, have sunk in night and their name blotted out. And, during this period, through what scenes of glory and humiliation has our own dear country passed! At its commencement, we were only twelve millions of people; and, since then, ten new States have been added to our number, each larger than an European empire. We have passed through a civil war unparalleled in its magnitude and its results. We have stricken the chains from four millions of slaves rooted on our soil, and changed the very structure of society. We have vindicated the principles of a free government beyond the apprehension of failure; and laid anew, under the western sun, the foundations of a republic whose genius, progress, and magnificent destiny no human mind has yet comprehended, and no human imagination has conceived.

Once more: during these forty years, changes, silent but inconceivably vast, have been made in religion, alike in our views and administration of it. Religion itself is unchangeable. It is founded in the nature of man, and is founded on a rock, — the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But our conceptions of its truths and our appreciation of its spirit will vary with the varying times, intelligence, and characters of men. In the earlier days of New England, it was harsh, gloomy, and repulsive. The minister stood in the pulpit with a stern countenance, and, in a voice that had no tones of tenderness and no relentings of pity, delivered his message. It was a message of terror; and the people sat beneath, and

listened and trembled, or were hardened into indifference or were lulled into acquiescence by the dull formality of these religious services. But with the advances of knowledge and refinement, a more genial and a gentler spirit had begun to prevail. About the time of which I speak, the great doctrinal controversy, which had shaken New England to its centre, divided the old Congregational churches, and brought anxiety and distress into families, had begun to subside; better opportunities for a liberal culture, for a larger and more comprehensive study of the Scriptures, for a larger acquaintance with the world's history and the wonderful discoveries of science were given; men of diviner gifts, of deeper insight and a heavenly temper, were raised up; and vast modifications have taken place in men's modes of belief and methods of ministration. They have gone with a new and subtler discernment into the profounder meanings of nature, and with a truer sympathy into the heart of Christianity; and they have spoken in sweeter tones, such as were breathed from the lips of Jesus, as he spoke on fair summer mornings on the plains of Judea, and more in the spirit of the great Father, who sends his rains and sunshine into the gardens of the just and the unjust. And so thousands and thousands have been stirred to the very depths of their being; and they who had come to Him in fear and sadness and self-reproach have gone away in tender gratitude, hope, and joy. Besides this, the pulpit has received a host of co-workers which it had never received before. Once it was the sole agent of public moral influence, standing alone to stem the torrent of vice and raise the standard of virtue. New and varied purifying and refining instrumentalities have sprung into being. Not merely the schoolroom, but lecture-rooms, halls for concerts, organizations for mutual protection and social influence, an increase of liberal studies, a larger access to the productions of sanctified genius, so healthful and healing, — all these have come

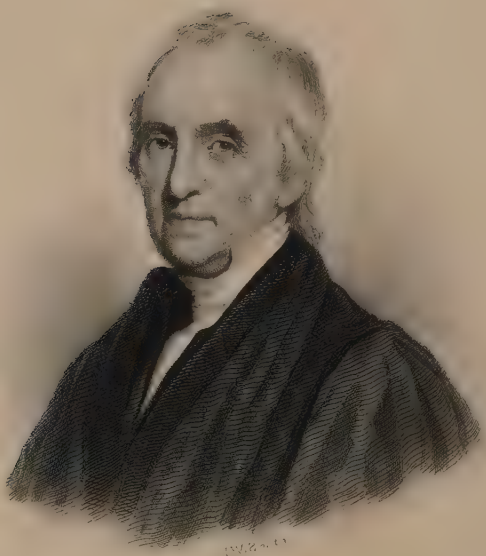
in aid of the pulpit, and are the instructors of the people. If they, and the spirit which they have engendered, have multiplied its tasks and made its peculiar work more difficult of accomplishment, they have enlarged beyond computation its range of thought, presented new topics for its discussion in the ever-varying aspects of human nature and human society, and called out its noblest energies and affections and acquirements; for he who would make the pulpit a power to-day must be able to do something more than make a skilful compilation of approved texts and weave them into his argument. He must do something more than repeat the familiar words of hoary prophets and inspired apostles, and of Jesus Christ. He must go down into the subtlest meaning of their words, and go up into the far range of heaven, where they would lift him. He must be familiar with the best knowledge of the age, and gather treasures from every region of the globe and every period of time. He must be in sympathy with the nobler instincts, yearnings, hopes, aspirations, and struggles of the hour; and by the unbroken study of his youth and his age, and by his long watchings and prayers, and communings with things unseen and eternal, be able, from the place where he shall stand, and by the influence which he shall put forth, to give them a wise direction, — and so, out of these perilous and conflicting times, build up a generation of men, truer, broader, more refined, and more profoundly Christian than the world has yet seen. When was a day so rich in its offerings, so awakening in its influences, so exacting in its demands, so abundant in its rewards? Sleep we may, in our cushioned pews and pulpits, in times of spiritual lethargy; but now, when the continent heaves with its excitements, and the nations in their agonies or their transports are driven on to the bent of their faculties, it were a mortal sin to be buried in sloth. Who that knows himself, the weakness of his resolution and the

strength of his temptations, would not choose a day like this for his earthly work?

Again, I am glad and grateful that my lot has been cast in this city. If the age has been stirring, so has been this place, the very focus of all the stirring influences around. When I first came to your town, on the twenty-eighth day of October, 1826, to try the unfledged wing of the young preacher, nothing could exceed its beauty and attractiveness. It was a country village of only four thousand inhabitants, but, seen in the brilliancy of an autumn day, one of the loveliest. I see it now, — its two rows of white-painted houses, intermingled with an occasional store or shop, planted for three-fourths of a mile on each side of your Main Street, in the midst of gardens and shade-trees and flowering shrubs, — all glittering in the light of the setting sun, lovely to the eye and grateful to the heart. For it lay, in sweet tranquillity, nestled between our hills, — no stir nor signs of change, no hurrying footsteps, no crowded masses, no din of traffic, no sound of whistle, to break the repose. Our western declivity, now covered with stately mansions, was then a field for grass and a pasture for cattle, with only a single avenue (Pleasant Street) the highway to the western borders. On the east, forests and meadows were close upon your doors; and on the south, a few rods beyond the Common, were no signs of habitation except here and there a solitary farmhouse, one or two insignificant factories, and the beginnings of a single village. Such was your town; and although the shire-town of the county, and distinguished for its courtesy, refinement, and social culture, this I may state as a specimen of its progress in the higher accomplishments, that there was no organ (if I may except a small, discordant instrument in the meeting-house of the Second Parish) in either of our churches, where there are now fifteen mingling their notes in the solemnities of public worship, besides that grand instrument,

the pride and boast of our city, which you have placed in your magnificent hall to thrill and refine us by its sweet discoursings every night in the week. And I may add, that there were then in our whole town only two pianofortes, where, for our social enjoyment and domestic training, it is estimated there are now two thousand.

Such was Worcester forty years ago, of which I can give only a glimpse. At the beginning of my ministry began that wonderful growth through which we have become one of the largest, the most enterprising, the most rapidly increasing inland cities in the State. The process of centralization was commencing; and we were stretching out our branches like the ancient laurel, the tree of poetry, so rich in its fragrance, and so beautiful in its flowers. Year by year, we were becoming fair in fame and prospered in estate, combining the advantages of city and country; rejoicing in whatever is refined in intelligence, culture, and social influence in the capital, and at the same time breathing the freshness of the air from the hills, and the sweet odor of green fields and gardens and blooming orchards. We had entered on the work of the fathers, and that work had been broad, like their streets which we travel to-day. Our foundations had been laid in wisdom, on a liberal and generous scale; but in consequence of the rush of immigrants into the town for the purposes of business, education, and social advantages, a superstructure was to be reared almost from the foundation-stone. All was to be created anew. Its tone and character remained substantially the same, but we were much in the condition of those who enter the primeval forest, and build a home and city there. Streets were to be laid out, and the location of squares selected; old institutions were to be remodelled, and adapted to the new times; the sixteen schools swelled into eighty-one, and every season a new one must be organized; the low-roofed schoolhouse



A. Bancroft.

must be demolished, and palaces reared in its stead; new associations for purposes of higher education, moral and religious training, and benevolent activity, must be inaugurated; lyceums, and societies for the study of natural science, public libraries, and mechanics' institutes must be formed; temperance associations and orphans' asylums, chapels for the poor, and sabbath-schools for the young, must be established, —for none of these existed forty years ago. Look at the noble structures that crown our beautiful hills, for the training and refining of this people; hear the panting train as it hurries by, freighted with the treasures of all climes for our uses; contemplate the varied instrumentalities for the guidance of human weakness, the lifting of the burden of labor, and the alleviation of human woe, and you will have some conception of the work to be accomplished by the men and women of the generation that is now passing away. If among the most favored of men are reckoned the founders of States, not the least among the privileged are they who have assisted in moulding the institutions and forming the character of such a city as this. I count it a great cause of gratitude, that I have been permitted to take even an humble part in achieving a work so noble and so beneficent.

Again, I am glad and grateful for having been permitted to minister to the Second Parish in Worcester. The second religious society formed in this city, having been gathered by my venerable predecessor, Rev. Dr. Bancroft, who went out and in, and led your devotions, for fifty-five years, it held its first meeting March 1, 1784; was incorporated March, 1785; and is accordingly eighty-two years old. He seemed chosen of Heaven, and was well fitted to conduct the difficult enterprise of its formation and establishment. A man of marked ability, the commanding intellect in this county, clear in his conceptions, rare in his attainments, and exact in his knowledge, of indomitable energy and perseverance,

full of constancy and courage and cheerful hope, genial and frank in his intercourse, strong in his convictions, outspoken in his utterance, kindly in his judgments, and unselfish in his life, he lived among us, the patriarch of his time, and left impressions on his generation which survive in the high moral tone and distinctive religious character of this community. He was a man to be honored; and if his monument had been placed in one of our public squares, and his name had been given to one of our most commanding streets, it would have been only a fitting expression of his great merits. When I came here, he had been for forty-two years the revered and trusted pastor of this church, shaped its destinies, soothed the hostilities of opposers, won their confidence, and vindicated its right to live. He had gathered about him, if not one of the largest, at least one of the most intelligent, congregations in the Commonwealth; members of Congress, judges of the courts, governors of the State, an unusual number of men of mark and influence.

And how shall I describe to you the congregation as I first saw it? Having finished my course at Cambridge, and preached a few times, I came here, at your invitation, as your candidate for settlement as colleague-pastor with Dr. Bancroft, who, then suffering from the infirmities of age, was no longer able to sustain alone the increasing duties of his office, and bear the heavier burthens of the time. This was the first and only place in which I ever stood in this unenviable and most trying of all human relations. I left the tranquil studies of the school: I came to you, not to enlighten you by a boy's wisdom, but to tell you what I would try and learn to do. I came to enter upon an untried work, which, after a long experience, I must pronounce the most difficult, the most arduous, the most responsible, committed to man, — the subtle and delicate task of instruct-

ing, aiding, and building up the spiritual character of an acute, active, intelligent congregation; a task from which the bravest may shrink, and in which the best furnished have only partially succeeded. I entered your town on the fairest of autumn days, and looked around upon the scenes which have since been my life-long home. At that time, there were only four instead of the twenty-five churches and chapels which are now every Sunday dispensing a power for good which we little comprehend, — not one remaining as I then saw them, all demolished, or changed, or appropriated to other than religious uses. There was the Old South Meeting-house with its familiar bell and the wakeful bird of St. Peter upon its steeple, built more than a century ago in the better style of New-England architecture by the Fathers of the town, and in which for many years they worshipped together, — since enlarged, but not improved, — then without a minister. Next there was the First Baptist Church, upon the spot where stands the present house upon its charred remains; an unsightly structure, defying all the rules of art, but the source of spiritual energy and a beneficent influence through the lips and life of Dr. Going, — a strong man, full of zeal and activity and untiring labor, alike devoted to the cause of education, good morals, and the Church of Christ. Next in point of location was the Central-Church building — recently erected, an ill-proportioned structure, enlarged into the more commodious edifice that now occupies its place; its minister, Mr. Hoadly, broken in health, and about to leave the post which he had occupied some five or six years. And finally, at the entrance of Summer Street from the north, was your own modest meeting-house, the same, with the exception of church-tower and dome, bell and clock, that is known to the present generation as the Summer-street Schoolhouse, — a building endeared to me by those vivid remembrances and tender

associations which cling around the spot where we have had our first great experience in life, and life's gravest responsibilities have been first laid upon us; for it was there I preached my first sermon, and there for two years I encountered the earliest and greatest trials of the Christian ministry.

Can I forget that beautiful Sabbath morning when I entered those courts and occupied the pulpit with that venerable man, your minister, whose fame I knew was in all our churches, — I a young man, a mere apprentice in the mighty art of preaching, of two-months' standing, and unskilled in the very rudiments? And how shall I describe the congregation before which I stood? They are fresh in my imagination to-day, — the forms and features and attitudes of that assembly imprinted on my memory as with a pen of iron, — an unusual concourse, come to listen to the young candidate, to pass judgment on his performances, and to determine the field of his future labors. A few of the first generation, old and gray-headed, and bent with years; the builders of the church and the first occupants of its pews, six at most, and as many more who had become their companions in their early conflicts and later victories; the Allens, the Bigelows, the Barnards, the Greens, the Lincolns, the Paines, the Salisburys and the Thomases, — names familiar in our annals, — were there. Then there was a still larger class of men in the pith of their manhood, of large gifts and acquirements, the leading men at the bar in this county and in the affairs of business, men of weight anywhere; young men, too, who have since won for themselves an honorable name; accomplished and strong-minded women; and children who have since become among the influential members of the society. What were your emotions on that day beyond those of curiosity I do not know; but mine were deep, and all but overpowering. You heard me patiently,

and not without approbation; for, after I had preached four Sundays, you invited me to preach three more; and then, at the close of seven-weeks' probation in all, Jan. 1, 1827, with a cordiality and kindness which have ever marked your dealings with me, through your committee — Samuel Allen, Samuel M. Burnside, Alpheus Merrifield, Rejoice Newton, and Charles Allen — you extended to me an unanimous invitation to become the junior minister with the Rev. Dr. Bancroft, over your parish.

I did not at once, and without grave deliberation, accept your call; for I seriously questioned my ability to fulfil your rightful expectations. Weak in body, and unfurnished with a single sermon except those which you had already heard, I feared the mortification of a total failure, and that our connection, formed after so brief but pleasant acquaintance, might terminate in disappointment and chagrin. Besides, I had made an engagement to supply the churches of our faith in Baltimore and Washington, where I spent the winter, and where proffers were made me of a longer service. While there, I was able to look at your invitation from a distance, calmly and dispassionately. It was very flattering to my ambition and gratifying to my taste. It promised me a home in the heart of the county dear to me by every tie of birth, kindred, education, and association. Your society I had been taught to honor, and your aged pastor to revere. It gave me opportunity. It offered me every incitement to the cultivation of all the faculties which I possessed, and a place in your homes of refinement for the growth of the deeper affections. I remembered, too, as I told you in my answer, "that candor is the companion of wisdom;" and the candor with which my services had been received induced me to believe that it would be continued. Besides, the counsel and aid which I hoped to receive from my venerable colleague led me to trust that my inexperience would be

saved from ruinous mistakes, and the labor of an incipient ministry lightened, — expectations how amply fulfilled! I communicated my acceptance of your kind invitation in a letter dated Baltimore, Jan. 23, 1827. Returning, I was ordained with the usual solemnities on Wednesday, March 28, forty years ago this day; a day, as it retires in the distance, growing more luminous with tender, grateful, and hallowed remembrances.

I refrain from pursuing the annals of the parish. The particulars are in your possession in a published discourse, preached on the completion of twenty-five years of my ministry. But, in order to give completeness to the present current of our thought, I must briefly remind you of the facts which are in that discourse more fully stated.

Soon after my settlement, the town, and with the town the parish, began to grow; and, in consequence of the inconvenient location of the old house and the difficulty of procuring eligible pews, the necessity of building a larger one in a more central position began to be generally admitted; and in the course of a few months a site was procured, plans were selected, the corner-stone was laid, and, Aug. 20, 1829, it was dedicated to Almighty God on this spot where we are now assembled, — a spot more sacred in the association than if the bones of an apostle lay buried beneath; for here was printed the first pulpit Bible ever published in this country. It was a pleasant religious home for ourselves and our children. It was associated with our deepest religious experience, and we learned to love even its deformities.

Pursuing the order of time, Aug. 19, 1839, another event occurred which touched us deeply. After an intimate and cordial connection of more than twelve years, unbroken by a moment's alienation, shadowed never by a suspicion of coldness, my venerable associate, whose name is a household

FIRST MEETING-HOUSE, ON SUMMER STREET.
Dedicated Jan. 1, 1792.

SECOND MEETING-HOUSE, ON MAIN STREET.
Dedicated Aug. 20, 1829. Destroyed by fire Aug. 24, 1849.

word among us, after months of lingering illness, brought to a triumphal close a ministry of fifty-four years. He passed away, and I was left sole pastor of this church. Although he preached but occasionally, and performed almost no pastoral duty, there was a sense of protection in his presence, and consciousness of safety in his counsels; and I felt, more than I can tell, the weighty responsibility of a new care laid upon me.

The years went on, and had no stay. Hitherto we had been a large, prosperous, and united congregation. But the time had come, long foreseen, when we must divide asunder, and worship at different altars. Allegiance to the cause of Christianity, the duty to maintain a generous religious hospitality towards those of the same household of faith, and an enlightened regard for the welfare of the city, demanded that we should provide another centre of religious influence. The first separate meeting for the formation of the Church of the Unity was held Feb. 2, 1845. It was a great event in the annals of the congregation. It was the sundering of ties cemented by years of intimate and cordial intercourse, the drawing apart of those who had long obeyed the same sabbath bell and offered their devotions together. I know what anxiety the separation cost you, and yet with what cheerfulness and hearty God-speed you saw them go. Nor will I refuse to acknowledge a degree of solicitude for the result of the enterprise. Familiar forms and friendly faces left us; and their pews, if filled at all, were to be filled with strangers. And yet I never wavered in my conviction that the act was wise, and would result in good. And you will bear me witness, that, by public speech and by private influence, I did what I could to promote its success. And was I not right? After the vicissitudes of twenty-two years, I see the younger sister of our household with a capacious and well-furnished home, a numerous

family, prosperous and happy. I feel an especial nearness to this congregation, though many of them are strangers to me. Its ministers are my dear personal friends, and have ever been my faithful co-workers. When shall another similar enterprise be undertaken to supply the religious wants of the six thousand in our city, who wander because they have no religious home?

I turn now to other events in our history. Aug. 24, 1849, we saw the evening sky suddenly lighted up, and were called from our homes to witness the entire destruction of our house of worship by fire. However we may regard it now, we saw it then with other feelings than those of indifference. There were associations connected with it which forbade that we should be unmoved. For twenty years we had gone up to it in company. It had registered the story of half a life, and it was written all over with precious memorials. In the language in which I then gave expression to our common emotion: "There was the record of our religious experience; of the doubts, hopes, and passionate desires of childhood and youth; of the inward strugglings, the calm resolves, the settled faith, the peace passing understanding, of maturer years. And there were the memories of God's varied discipline; the memories of the loved and lost with whom we had walked by the way, and by whose side we had sat in the sanctuary, kindred near and distant, friends earlier and later."

But you did not give yourselves to many days' mourning. The destruction of your house and the necessity of worshipping in the different halls of the city were a trial to your faith and affection, a test of your attachment to this ancient society. And can I forget the cheerfulness, the unwavering trust, the earnest, self-sacrificing devotion with which you set yourselves to the erection of your third house, this spacious and beautiful structure in which we are assembled, — a build-

ing of such fair proportions, that they who loved the old did not weep when they entered the new? Within three days after the conflagration it was begun, completed in eighteen months, and dedicated March 26, 1851, sixteen years ago. I dwell upon the events of this period; for they were the occasions of promptness and perseverance, revealed your hidden strength, and were rich in spiritual good. We entered this house with gladness and with song, and learned what is always true, if we know how to use the discipline, that —

> "The clouds we so much dread
> Are big with mercy, and shall break
> With blessings on our head."

After the fire and tempest came the sunshine. Then were the palmy days of this society. Crowds thronged our sanctuary, whom we had never seen before. New interests were awakened, a deeper personal responsibility was felt, larger numbers than ever before came to our communion-table, and a spirit of grateful and hallowed joy seemed to pervade the congregation. We felt that God indeed had blessed us, — and why should we not with enkindled devotion enter on the high service to which he was calling us. We had reared a pleasant home for ourselves; and if he should spare it, we would leave it, sanctified by our prayers, our vows, our noblest endeavors, as our best legacy to our children. These are the times, my friends, which the minister reviews with most of satisfaction. They spread a sanctity over his work, and endear, beyond the power of words to express, the relation between him and his people.

I have now recalled, as briefly as I could, the outward events of our parish in which you have been most interested. But I must linger a little longer. I must dwell on things more personal. I must remind you of what I have tried to do for you, what you have done for me, and of what we

have done and suffered together; for your joys have been my joys and your sorrows mine. All that has come to you has come to me yet more nearly.

Foremost, then, in all the work which I have attempted to do among you, has been that of preaching, — the most absorbing, the most difficult, the most brain and heart-trying of all human vocations. It is easy enough to fill a half-hour with words, words. It is easy to tell over, for the hundredth time, what others have said. But to reach "the burning and dilating idea of excellence" in that noble art; to reach the deep things of God; to be true and fresh and effective; to touch the deeper thoughts and affections of man; to say the thing which shall gain a hearing in this self-absorbing age and in this stirring community, from men bent in their hot haste after the material and temporal, and devoted in their scorn and neglect of things eternal, — is the hardest task ever committed to the weakness of man. How often will the preacher be tempted to send back a sigh for a return of those favored times when Heaven's direct inspiration fired the bosoms and hallowed the lips of prophets, and when apostles stood, bared and reverential, and spoke as it was given them to speak! There is no composition so difficult as sermon-writing, and no place so exacting as the pulpit, insatiable as the grave. The historian cares not for dull pages together; for, in the course of his work, he shall come to events that shall inspire his pen with eloquence. The public lecturer has spent six months in preparing one of those sparkling, finished essays which thrills you with pleasure, and prompts the wonder why you cannot hear such in the pulpit; and yet you demand from the preacher two sermons each Sunday, and, if he does not interest you, you will not hear him. I say the intellectual activity and spiritual refinement of this day have rendered preaching the most difficult of all arts. It costs a large expenditure of the material

which Turner said he used in painting. He was asked what pigments he had found to produce such brilliant colors. "Brains, sir, brains," was his reply. And when I consider the multiplied duties of ministers, the thousand interruptions and distractions which come in the very heat of their composition and the weaving of their discourse, I wonder they preach half so well as they do. Of my own utterances here, it is not for me to speak. If you have thought them poor, so have I oftener than you. I can only say, I have tried to be a truthful, faithful, improving preacher; asking the reward, not in wide notoriety, not in poor compliment, but in the deeper sanctity of your lives and characters.

But what I have preached is much more important than how I have preached. And I must confess to no great reverence for the sharply defined dogmas, the systems of theology, on which speculative men have so vehemently insisted; for I have often seen beneath all diversities of doctrine, down in the deep places where the heart beats and the sentiments and affections are engendered, among obscure men and women whose Bible was their only book, a clearness of vision, a singleness of purpose, a serenity of trust, and a beauty of life that filled me with admiration. The theological distinctions about which we bandy words seldom intrude and awaken any interest at those times when the earth recedes and the grand realities of the world to come are nigh. Then only the simplest verities are of any moment, and then distinct apprehensions on these subjects oftener come from the heart than the head. I have seldom discussed here those which belong rather to the professor's chair than the Christian pulpit. And yet how often, through a misconception of these simplest verities, come narrowness of soul, gross superstitions, and the loss of peace in believing. I cannot overrate the importance of true and ennobling reli-

gious ideas. Mine, such as they were when I came to you, were what I had learned from books and from the lips of Ware and Norton and Channing, and were substantially, I suppose, in harmony with those which you had been taught from your pulpit. But, after the passage of thoughtful and studious years, I must confess to modifications which seem almost like a new revelation. What then was dim has now become distinct. What then was only traditional has been wrought, I trust, into my profoundest experience. I believe in God; and he who can say that does a greater thing than if he could say, "This world's wealth is all my own,"— God, not as mean, selfish men conceive of him, a reflection of their own mean minds, a monster of cruelty, but God, the scale of whose being is measured by the infinitude of the universe, who travels "in the awful pathway of the stars, and the majesty of whose rule is seen in the tranquil order and unbroken silence of creation," and yet God whose benignity is equal to his greatness. His loveliest attribute is his mercy. He stoops to our lowness. I have been jealous, and I have taught you to be jealous, of every representation of him which clouds our apprehensions of his exceeding love. He comes to me like the gentle-hearted pastor who had seen his endeared parishioner wandering from his peace into sinful courses. "I will pursue that man," he said, "until I reclaim him." So the good God — never wrathful, ever compassionate in his inflictions — pursues by his varied discipline until he reclaims us. Terror, we have learned from our schoolrooms and our homes, is a poor instrument of moral and spiritual training. The contemplation of exceeding love only wins to goodness; and God's love, seen in all nature and all life and religion, is the great agent in the reform alike of the obstinate and the broken-hearted sinner and the gentle training of the innocent and good. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the image and the appointed emblem of

the good God, that miracle of the ages, expressly raised up, and endowed with heavenly gifts, that he might reveal the will of God, and bring the whole human family to his footstool. I believe, and have taught, that he saves us through the influence of his word, his life and death, by his sublime revelation, by the spirit which he breathes and the undying sympathies which he awakens sanctifying the earth which he trod for our sakes, and opening the heavens, where he has gone, to our hope. I believe in the great meaning of human life, its mysterious allotments, its births and deaths and marriage solemnities, its joys and temptations and woes, — all under the direction of a beneficent Providence, all designed to help our progress and secure our peace. I believe, and have taught, the infinite worth of Christianity, and of its doctrines of a resurrection, retribution, and a life to come — a resurrection whose truth embraces also the vital meaning of a resurrection from the grave of worldliness and sin; a retribution beginning the moment the good or evil is done, and ending — when or where? and a life to come, revealed to us in that more abundant life which the Saviour promised to bestow, and which his faithful servants receive, and perfected in those upper domains where God unveils his glory, and will make clear the final destiny of man.

In selecting topics for the pulpit, I have oftenest chosen those which have a distinct bearing on the solemnities, responsibilities, and duties of life. I have loved to tell of God's ever-during presence and Christ's interposing helps, and of the serene satisfactions that attend each day and each hour of duty done. I have loved to think of you as engaged in the conflicts of temptation in the places of your business, — your offices, your counting-rooms, your shops, and your farms, — and to tell how you may meet the great trials there. I have loved to enter your happy, prospered homes where you meet daily with your children, and the retired, still

chamber where you and yours have lingered, and tell you that which would soothe the anxiety, and help you lift the burthen. I have told you, and I tell you now, that the first and great thing is an assured conviction of the reality of spiritual things; the first and foremost duty, a personal consecration to the great interests of religion, demanding a change, it may be, in the very purposes of your being, resulting in a steadfast, exalted, devoted Christian life. There are other topics, too, which I have sometimes brought before you. In times like those through which we have passed, when the earthquake and the volcano were in commotion and the foundations of society were upheaved, and in this city whose very air was teeming with excitement and all hearts were palpitating with emotions, he must have been more or less than a man who did not carry into his ministrations a portion of the common feeling. The interests of country and humanity were at stake; and how could this pulpit be dumb, and not be false to its trust? If any ever blamed the preacher for introducing unusual, delicate, and difficult subjects into this place, and approaching too nearly the discussions of the council-chamber and the caucus-room, let them remember that Christianity enters with the strictest scrutiny into the acts of nations, and demands that they shall be done, not of narrow self-seeking, but of humanity. And when our very children, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, were bleeding on the gory field, and dying in distant hospitals, she must be there too, with her voice of guidance, soothing, and consolation.

How many sermons I have written and preached, you may wish to know, and it is well that the congregation should know of our labor of this kind; for they will then be candid, and even generous. I will remind you, then, of the thousand things to be done not strictly connected with our pulpit and parish duties, — lectures to be delivered, public

addresses to be made, pages to be written in behalf of education, social reform, and the common improvement. For twenty-five years, I was on your School Committee, and for the larger portion of that time bore, as chairman, an onerous share of its responsibility. I have with you been invited to sit on one hundred and five ecclesiastical councils; the most of which I attended, and took a part in the public services of ordination. Besides these, and many things more, I have prepared and written out in full one thousand five hundred and thirty-five sermons, thirty thousand pages, which, if they were printed, would make a library of seventy-five volumes of the size of the common edition of Dr. Channing's works. Though I have been no laggard in my work, I do not speak of this to excite your wonder. Probably, I have written fewer than most who have preached so long in one place as I have done, perhaps too many for your good and mine. Walter Scott was called a prolific writer; but all which he wrote is less than sixty-five volumes of the same size. But it is not a question of so considerable moment how much we have written, as with what discrimination, with what power, with what fidelity, with what urgency of appeal we have preached, proclaimed the word which once fell from the lips of prophets and apostles, gifted, heroic, and saintly men, and of Jesus, the son of God. But now, standing at the close of forty-years' service, thronged with the varied memories of a long life, I enter into inquisition with my own soul; I take upon my lips the words of Pierpont, written when he was seventy-seven years old: —

"Spirit, my spirit, hath each stage
That brought thee up from youth
To thy now venerable age
Seen thee in search of Truth?

Hast thou in search of Truth been true, —
True to thyself and her?
And been, with many or with few,
Her honest worshipper?"

True to thyself and her? Ah! my friends, there is one at least in this assembly to whom these questions, put in the hour of self-inspection by the brave old poet who himself had never been untrue to his convictions, indited by the hand that now moulders in dust, come to-day with unutterable solemnity.

But there are other public duties of the minister besides those of the pulpit, all essential to the religious life of the congregation. The sabbath-school, the flower garden for the little ones, where the germs of the religious character are set and tended, the hope of your future society, has always been in my thought and in my heart. I have done for it what I could, habitually mingling in its services. The ordinances, too, the consecrating and memorial rites of Christ's own appointment, have been administered without interruption, and may I not say, with a growing reverence? for need I remind you, when I remember how you have sometimes been moved by the act, that they shed a sanctifying influence over the house in which they have been honored? I have ever welcomed with unmingled satisfaction the participation of yourselves and your children in these hallowed observances. The seasons when they have thronged about me, and I have touched their brows with the waters of baptism, and you have come at my bidding to the table of remembrance, have been precious to me; for then I saw a new testimony to your respect, at least, for the time-hallowed observances of Christianity, and your desire to go more deeply into the interior religious life.

In connection with all these have been our especial pastoral relations, second in importance to none, as delicate and wearing as any. When I came here forty years ago, you, with a kind welcome which I can never forget, threw open widely your doors, and invited me to the hospitality and intimacy of your homes; and I have always entered them with the free-

dom of an old friend among friends. I have wished to visit you so often that I might be familiar with you all, and call your children by name, but have not done it so often, perhaps, as it might have been well for us both. But why I have not, you will in part comprehend, when you call to mind the varied demands upon the time of the minister of which I have spoken, and the absorbing duties which press upon him. If, in the multiplicity of my occupations, I have overlooked any of you, pray pardon me; for I did not mean it. I beg that you will remember, that even a change of residence to the next street has often left me in ignorance where to find you, and interrupted visits which have always been to me delightful.

I have seen you in your homes. I have been with you in the golden days, so many of which, through the good providence of God, have come to us, when peace and prosperity were within your dwellings and your hearts were glad; on festal occasions, when you have heard good tidings from the absent, when you have welcomed the return of your children from afar, and when you have sent them out to enter homes of their own. I have solemnized four hundred and twenty-nine marriages, — united in the closest bonds, for weal or woe, eight hundred and fifty-eight persons. What I have been instrumental in adding to human happiness, each heart may tell; but if each house which they have entered together has been sanctified by the continued presence of the great Guest who went to, and left his blessing at, the nuptial feast in Cana of Galilee, how many of the intensest joys of human life have I shared with you! I have been with you in sorrow, when the sudden calamity has come, disappointment and failure in your cherished plans; and when lingering sickness and growing infirmity have overtaken and saddened you and yours: and I do not remember the occasion when I was in the city, and knew of your illness, that I did not come. I have stood at the bed of your dying, whispered words of

consolation and offered my prayers in the still room, and witnessed with you their peace in departing. As I go back on the track of vanished years, scenes recur to me the most beautiful, uplifting, and heart-touching in human experience; scenes of bitter parting, but of sweet acquiescence; scenes of terrible anguish, but of unutterable tenderness and triumphant hope. Oh the might, the conquering power, of Christian faith! Death had touched the cheek with his cold breath; but one was there whom we could not see, but only hear the rustle of his celestial robe, and the countenance was lighted up with an ineffable smile. The hand was stilled, but it was raised as if beckoning to another. The heart was fluttering in its last agonies, but warm with its love for those who were to be left behind. Death was conquered and heaven opened.

What changes have we witnessed! Almost every house has been visited, and troops of those we loved have gone out from them. Nay, the very houses themselves, where our domestic joys and sanctities have been shared together, have been demolished, the hearthstone removed, and the places where they stood forgotten. I enter this place of worship, and I meet not here to-day those whom I used to see. A shadowy congregation of as true-hearted, devoted friends as ever blessed a minister sit before me. But the living forms as I knew them are not here. They have gone out from these portals, to enter them no more. They are scattered in every region of the globe: they have gone to join the great congregation of the dead. Since I came among you, I have attended the funeral services of eight hundred persons, — an assembly larger than that which is gathered within this house to-day. Our loved ones, "they whose voices mingled as they prayed," lie under many skies, and beneath the soil of many lands; one who left us only a few weeks ago waits to cross the ocean and take his silent place among his kindred; eight

sleep with the brave in a soldier's grave; and the rest of this great company,— I enter yonder beautiful cemetery, where, on a September afternoon twenty-eight years ago, I stood, in presence of a great crowd, and offered our common supplications in consecration of the place, while our venerable fellow-worshipper, older than this parish, its steadfast friend through these long years, and the only survivor of his generation, too feeble, alas! by reason of his infirmities, to be here to-day, where his heart is,— he, in fitting speech, told us of the feelings of the hour, and the sacred duties which our enterprise imposed. We stood then in the midst of unbroken fields and forests. No sacred associations then clustered around the spot, no tender memories hallowed it. And now more than two thousand of our acquaintance and endeared friends have been carried thither to make it sacred. The virgin soil was broken to receive, as its first tenant, a beloved member of this congregation, endeared to us all by her simple graces, the warmth of her affections, and the innocency of her life. And what a procession — one after another, the lovely child and the promising youth, the beautiful in their high places, the rich in intellectual endowments, the good, the useful, the ornaments of the city, venerable men and women — has followed! They are the congregation which I have seen in our sanctuary. On a sweet day last autumn, one of the loveliest, I strolled into its sacred precincts. The autumn leaves were falling, and the autumn winds were singing a requiem through the branches of the trees; and then came over me, for a moment, the saddening influence of the place, the home of our dead. I paused and pondered as I passed the white gravestones, which had grown so thickly all around. I read on them familiar names,— the names of your friends and mine, dear as our own souls. But no sad, depressing thoughts remained with me; for the tokens of God's love were close around me, the bright heavens were

gleaming above the fading objects of earth. Jesus had stood in a garden of graves just like this; and his soul-enkindling words, "I am the resurrection and the life," uttered by the grave of Lazarus, repeated every time we enter with our dead the sacred enclosure, came to me with a fresh and hallowed meaning. I seemed to see the white-robed messengers that watched by his tomb, and to hear them say, "He is not here: he is risen." Your friends and mine are not there in that sacred deposit where we have laid them, and reared their monuments. They have arisen; they have passed the golden gates; they have entered the bright mansions; they gaze upon the wonders of the upper world,— and will you not join them there?

I linger, my friends, a moment longer; for I promised to remind you of what you have done for me. You may forget, I never. From the moment we met, you have loaded me with your thoughtful kindness. You have strewed my path with flowers, and sweetened my home. You have aided me in a thousand ways: you have lifted my burthens, and made them light. When I was sick with perilous illness, and could not serve you, you took me, and bore me away where, amid tropical breezes, I should find health: I found it, not only health, but a renovated system, a vigor which has enabled me to serve you for years without interruption. I found more: I learned some of the deepest lessons of life; I looked upon the strange mystery of the sea; I contemplated new scenes of creative skill,— the wonderful richness, beauty, and variety with which God has clothed his creations, the vastness and diversity of his gifts to man, — and a new song of adoration was put into my mouth. I learned a new lesson of trust. For when mortal disease came to our home, and the shadow of death passed us by in a land of strangers, He came with succor and abundant support. I learned, too, a new lesson of man's tenderness and quick sympathy: for

yours followed me where I went; and little kindnesses, from those whose faces I had not seen and whose language I could not speak, flowed in upon me. When again I was wearied, and needed rest, you bore me once more over the sea. You gave me opportunity to look on the scenes of old history, the grandeur of mountains, and the world of art. God was with me there. He brought me back once more enriched, and the better able to enrich you. And now, on this day of our mutual felicitations, you have overwhelmed me by the largeness of your bounty. You have touched me deeply by the spontaneous, but most tender expressions of your devotion. Your last and most welcome communication,— it is written on my heart; I shall place it among my treasures; I shall keep it to shew those who shall come after us, that the old allegiance to the ministry—the relation of mutual confidence, good-will, and affection—is not all gone, is still a reality, in spite of the errors of youth, the shortcomings of manhood, the monotony, and perhaps the unconscious infirmities, of age. My friends, I thank you with the heart's gratitude.

I have now done. I have spoken to you of the past, and invited you and myself to its grave retrospections. Momentous to us both have been these forty years. They have inscribed their deeds on all around us. They survive in their influence upon our characters. They are registered in God's book. I ask not concerning the future. I raise not the veil, nor seek a glimpse of what is before us, pastor and people. It is in God's ordering. To-day only is ours. Let it be devoted to tender, glad, and grateful remembrances. And so "I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

NOTE.

THE gift referred to by Dr. Hill consisted of $3,394, presented to him by the members of the parish in the month of March, accompanied by the following testimonial, with signatures attached: —

The completion of forty years from March 28, 1827, the date of the settlement of Rev. Dr. Hill as pastor of the Second Parish in Worcester, is so near at hand as to give occasion for a calm consideration of his relation to us as his parishioners. For this long period, he has devoted exclusively all his powers and all his acquirements for our advantage. The members of the parish have shown their estimation of his pulpit services by the fact, that they have given to his stated performances as general attendance and as interested attention as they have accorded to the novelty of famous and eloquent preachers who have officiated in his place. He has maintained a high and unquestioned position among the most honored clergymen of all denominations. He has not been second in the estimation of the people of this city, when clergymen have been called upon to lead in public prayers and counsels. Under his wise labors and Christian influence, this parish has enjoyed uninterrupted harmony and a respected character. In dispensing the services of Christianity in our families, he has been prompt, sympathetic, and acceptable to an unusual degree. In these forty years, his affectionate, consoling, and peculiarly appropriate intercessions at the bed of death are freshly remembered in many homes. In this long course of attention to our highest interests as his parishioners, he has had no thought and no opportunity to lay up a provision for his own household in the days when he may lose his present power of acceptable and remunerating labor.

Such is the most brief and entirely true record of Rev. Dr. Hill as our pastor, without a word of praise or sentiment. On this interesting occasion, at a time when we have generally shared in the increased prosperity of our city, we are disposed by our sense of the great benefits which we have received from his faithful and unsparing labors, by our gratitude for his generous efforts for our highest good, by our respect for his honored and irreproachable character, and some of us by the deepest feeling of affection and most sacred obligation, to offer to our revered pastor the donations set against our names, as an expression of personal regard, and of congratulation that he has thus far passed with honor and success in his Christian work: and we invoke for him the blessing of our God, that his home may be always happy; that his own health and the health of the beloved and respected partner of his cares, his labors, and his joys, may be renewed and confirmed; and that he may have long-continued ability, enriched by his great experience as a teacher of those views of the revelation of Jesus Christ which our parish was established to maintain and promote.

Worcester, Feb. 22, 1867.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE VESTRY.

PRESENT CHURCH, ON MAIN STREET.
Dedicated March 26, 1851.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE VESTRY.

At the conclusion of the exercises in the church, the members of the parish, together with the invited guests, repaired to the vestry, where an elegant collation, prepared by the ladies, awaited them. Rev. Dr. Joseph Allen, of Northborough, the patriarch of the Worcester-county Association, asked the Divine blessing; and an agreeable hour was passed in discussing the merits of the repast, and in exchanging congratulations. At length, Hon. Stephen Salisbury, who occupied the head of the table, thus introduced the further proceedings: —

Ladies and Gentlemen, — On this day, forty years have come back to revisit us with associations connected with the respected pastor of this society, — forty years of active and oft-repeated visitations, with the influences of religion and wise counsels and the happiness of friendship, in our homes; forty years of ministrations of the holy sacraments of our faith; forty years of earnest and solemn prayers, which were designed to enable us to rise above the entanglements of earth, and to seek the good and perfect gifts which come down from above; forty years of faithful instructions, enforced by all he could gather of strength and illustration to lead us to right opinions and a conscientious Christian life. In the courageous fidelity of his service, we have sometimes had occasion to remember that "the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of a deceitful enemy;" and we have been compelled

to acknowledge, that his reproofs, though like "all chastening, not for the present joyous, but grievous," have tended to "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them who have been exercised thereby." In the whole range of human effort, there is no occupation that has more of labor, of unrequited self-sacrifice, and of chilling disappointment, than the office of a Christian minister; and there is none that has higher satisfactions, stronger encouragements, and a more glorious reward. Is it not fit, then, that we should commemorate, this day, a ministry of forty years, maintained with continued ability in harmony and peace, honored and respected abroad and at home?

No one can regret more than I do, that I now stand in the place which you would expect to see filled by one, who, from the period of his manhood, for sixty-three years, has been the leader of this parish in social enjoyments, not less than in all enterprises of more sober utility and improvement. We are deprived of the presence of Governor Lincoln to-day by sickness, which occurred nine days ago; but we are gladdened with the hope that he will soon be restored. He has permitted me to assure you that his spirit is with you, and that he feels the greatest interest in the memories and incidents of this day.

The parish have authorized me to address a welcome to friends who have been invited, and to call on them for such expressions of interest in the occasion as they may choose to offer. As I look around me, I am persuaded that the forty years might have forty representatives here, who would be heard with pleasure; and I must beg that the speakers will use as much brevity as possible, to enable me to enlarge the variety of the entertainment.

On the third Sunday in March, 1785, exactly eighty-two years ago, that wise and good man, whose portrait is now before you, began to preach to this society. I have not the privilege to occupy your time by a eulogy on his character and labors. I will ask Hon. Phinehas Ball, one of the deacons of this church, to say a word of the past and present of our parish.

Deacon BALL then said: —

Mr. PRESIDENT, — It seems hardly appropriate that you should call upon me, one of her youngest adopted sons, to answer to-day for this ancient parish. And I confess, sir, to feelings of profound sadness, that bodily infirmity deprives us of the presence and the address of the fathers of the church, and compels you to this

alternative. The long array of honored names her record bears, of sainted sons and daughters lying in that slumber that knows no waking, bids me answer to your call in few words, and bear my part here with that "expressive silence" more touching than words or rhetorical numbers. Still in my teens as a member, I have no personal recollections of her spring or opening summer with which to enliven this hour. Her past history, through him whose image hangs above you, and through the venerated labors of him whose fortieth anniversary we now celebrate, is written upon those everlasting tablets where "nothing good ever dies." And confidently can we say, that, in the living experiences of our souls, oft has our pastor aided, through Him who is the Fount of all life, to turn our sorrow into joy, our mourning into resignation, and our darkness into light. May the years of his life yet among us be many; and may these kindly offices of his never be less, or our appreciation of them in any manner diminished! And, in conclusion, may the evening of his life here with us be one of those bright, serene, hallowed, New-England sunsets, that no artist's pencil can fix, or speech of man describe, on the closing of which, in that spirit-world, may he hear the welcome summons, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter now into the rest of thy labors!

To this Rev. Dr. HILL responded: —

Having occupied so much of the time of his parishioners and friends to-day, he had no right to appropriate more than a brief moment now. But he must indulge himself in expressing once more his deep, heartfelt gratitude for their kind words and wishes. He could only repeat that his connection with them had been delightful. If he had ever pained them by his language from the pulpit when none could answer, he begged them to forget it, except in so far as they should give it the friendly interpretation which had been given by the kind parishioner at his side, who had reminded them, "that open rebuke is better than secret love, and that faithful are the wounds of a friend." He thanked them that they had not seized this opportunity, when they all stood upon the same platform, to retaliate any of his bitter speeches, but only to tell him, what it was most grateful for him to know, that he had helped to turn the shady hours of life into sunshine, and taught them to bring joy out of grief.

Allusions had been made which reminded him that he was no longer young. He averred upon his conscience that he did not feel old. His years had been so sunny that they had imperceptibly glided away, and he had found himself ranked among the elders before he was conscious of having passed his early manhood. He referred to some occasions when the reminder came home, and the conviction began to dawn upon him. "I was in a distant town," he said, "on an exchange. I was among strangers, and committed to the tender care of domestics. On Sunday morning, while I was meditating my discourse, on my bed, I overheard myself made the subject of discourse in the street below: 'And who is to preach for us to-day? Where does he come from? What sort of a man is he? Is he old or young?' Here was the vital question. There was a hesitation, a pause, as if time were needed to settle so grave a question. 'He is oldish' was the reply. But another admonition. When years more had gone, and the faces of friends had changed, I was at a public meeting in one of the churches in this city, and had offered some remarks, not full, most likely, of the wisdom of age. I was followed by one whose discretion, kindness, and courtesy no one ever doubted. He began, 'As my venerable friend has said,' and turned and looked straight at me, who sat behind. I turned round unconsciously to see what venerable friend was behind me. So slow are we to recognize the changes of time which are apparent to every one else.

"So it is, my friends: we may hide from ourselves the work of decay, we may shut our eyes on the altered look which it brings; but there are tell-tales all around us which will not let us forget them. The gray hairs will come, and tell of the passage of years. But we will not believe their story. Except with our own consent, the moss and the mould will never gather about our inner selves: the heart will never grow old. And this is my specific: Keep young by keeping a good conscience; keep young by a fresh consecration every day to the duties which God has imposed, and a generous sympathy with all whom God has made; keep young by living near to heaven, and in close relation with those who bear most of its image, the young."

Mr. Salisbury then said: —

Our pastor has had frequent conferences and an interchange of good offices with the clergymen of the Worcester Association, and

has thereby been edified, guided, and strengthened in his work. We welcome these brothers to-day, and hope to receive from them the expression of the good-will manifested in all these years. No more than one of the clergymen who took part in the ordination services of Rev. Dr. Hill is now living, and he is absent from the country. I will ask Rev. Mr. Bartol, of Lancaster, who is the senior of those associates, who visit us to-day, to respond for the fathers and younger brethren of the Worcester Association.

Rev. Mr. BARTOL addressed the company: —

I feel very much embarrassed, sir, in being thus called upon as the oldest member of the Worcester Association. My confusion must, I think, be manifest; and it will, I hope, be pardoned. I apprehend that you have raised me to an eminence, or crowned me with a distinction, to which neither my years nor my wisdom can make my claim good. I have an impression, — it may be a delusion, but, if so, I shall not readily be disabused, — that Dr. Allen, for example, overlooking for the present Dr. Hill, has considerably the advantage of me. In one respect only can I claim the precedence due to seniority. I am the clerical representative of the oldest *church* in this association, — older by thirty years, I believe, than any other, of whatever name, in this city or entire county. This must be what you mean when you confer upon me the superlative degree of the adjective *old*. Otherwise, I have always counted myself among the younger members. So much is this my feeling and my habit, that when I had a hint from you, before we came in here, that you would look to me, at table, to answer to the sentiment now before us, I was somewhat startled. And yet, to tell the honest truth, Mr. President, I have been overtaken with the same sort of surprise so many times within the last two or three years, that its novelty ought to be wearing off; and I must make up my mind not to be surprised in this particular any further. Here, at any rate, is the fact staring me in the face to-day, that, old or young, I have been a member of the association for half as long a term as Dr. Hill himself has. The only difficulty is, that I cannot, to use an expressive word, *realize* that fact. But, though I do not realize the passage of twenty years since he gave me the Charge at my ordination, I do realize the same filial reverence and affection for him.

Let me not forget, however, that the exigencies of the present

occasion do not suffer any of us, as you have already suggested, to be long. And so I will come to the point at once by declaring, that, glad as I am in general to avoid the delivery of speeches, I should be ashamed not to be ready at any time or under any circumstances to acknowledge, when challenged thereto, any compliment to the Worcester Association; and that, whatever my claim may or may not be to speak for it, I can venture without the slightest hesitation to return the thanks of all its members for the invitation which has now called them together. We rejoice, sir, and are very grateful, that we can unite with this society and the other friends, in this public recognition of the long, faithful, and distinguished services of Dr. Hill. We always come up to this city as our centre of union: it is only with somewhat more than the usual fervor that we ejaculate to-day: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Peace be still within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Yea, sir, for my brethren and companion's sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, we will seek thy good.

Mr. SALISBURY remarked, that, in 1845, a colony went out from this society, bearing a scion of the old stock, which has grown up to a tree of life that rivals the size of the parent trunk, and gladly receives us under its refreshing shade, and exchanges with us all Christian hospitalities. I request the Rev. Mr. Shippen, the pastor, to respond for the Church of the Unity.

Rev. Mr. SHIPPEN then said: —

"Mr. PRESIDENT, — The Church of the Unity, in goodly representation, is here to speak for itself by responsive sympathy and hearty interest in all the services of the day. We hardly wish to be accounted visitors, but part of the scattered family returned, as on some Thanksgiving Day, to the familiar altar and festive board of the old home."

After speaking at some length of the value of permanency in the pastoral relation, and congratulating the parish on the enjoyment of a forty-years' ministry, — a privilege so rare in these changing days, — Mr. S. bore grateful testimony to the friendly courtesy of Dr. Hill toward himself, and the cordial relations existing between them for eight years without a shadow. He also spoke of the

brotherly fellowship existing between the two parishes; each welcoming the other's pastor into its social circle with hearty hospitality; both uniting in charitable enterprise, and in religious services of public days, of Fast and Thanksgiving, and sometimes of the summer vacation; mutually strengthening each other by giving prosperity to the common cause, and promoting zeal and good works by friendly emulation, without any consciousness of jealous rivalry; and closed by saying, such should be the relations of all the followers of the Master, and expressing the hope that all present might soon see the day when all Christian churches should sustain toward each other the brotherly relations of the Second Church and the Church of the Unity.

Rev. E. E. Hale, the first minister of the Church of the Unity, had been invited to take part in the services, and had accepted the invitation; but, at the last moment, he was prevented from attending the festival. The following lines are from his letter to the Committee: —

I am to the last degree sorry not to be at the celebration. For the ten most valuable years of my life, I had the great blessing of Dr. Hill's constant friendship, — almost his daily society and advice. I am most eager to say to him, that there is no privilege of a happy life to which I look back more gratefully. I have never forgotten the heartiness with which, at the ordination dinner, on the day of my settlement, he seized my hand, and reminded me how the Saviour sent us out two and two: and I am sure no man ever had adviser or friend more generous, true, and kind, than I always found him. It would be impossible for me to tell him how often, in daily duty, I said to myself, "This must be the best way, for Dr. Hill says so."

If I could have been at your festival, I should have tried to thank him, in the most public way, for such services to me. He has my best hopes and prayers for the long preservation of the health and strength which makes him so useful to the people of Worcester, and to us all.

Hon. Henry Chapin, on being invited to respond for the laymen of the Church of the Unity, said in substance as follows: —

Mr. President, — From a hint which was quietly given to me, I had reason to fear that I might be called upon to respond; but when I thought of preparation, I found that I might as well attempt to bottle up the electricity of the heavens, as to put in form my feelings upon this occasion. I therefore concluded to take my chance, and run for luck if an emergency should arise. My own course in life has been so intimately connected with that of the gentleman who this day has completed the fortieth year of his ministry, that I may be excused for referring to it. While I was a boy, fitting for college, Mr. Hill and Mr. Allen (since Dr. Hill and Judge Allen) visited the Academy at Milford with reference to procuring a teacher for the Worcester Latin School. The result of that visit was that our preceptor, Hon. Charles Thurber, was eventually transferred to Worcester. When I was looking about to choose a profession and a place to study, finding that my old preceptor was at Worcester, I paid him a visit. The result of that visit was that I found my way into the office of my friend Governor Washburn; and the result of it all has been, that, from coming to this place a stranger to all the people except one family, I became so strongly attached to it and to its people, that I never was satisfied until it became my home. Here I met Dr. Hill. From first to last, he has been my constant friend. When affliction crossed my threshold, his warm heart and his earnest prayers helped me to bear the trial. When it was either my fortune, or misfortune, to be elected mayor of this city, I found Dr. Hill constantly by my side upon the School Committee; and at the end of my term he had the conscience to move a vote of thanks for the manner in which I had performed the duties of my office. For a time I was a member of his society; and, although I had forgotten the circumstances, I find, that, while I attended his meeting, my name was on the parish-books as a member of the society, and that I paid my taxes like a man. No one who has not paid his taxes under like circumstances can appreciate the comfort to be derived from this simple fact. Had it been otherwise, I should not have been present on this occasion. I left this society, and joined the Church of the Unity, from no feeling of disrespect or any want of regard for Dr. Hill or the people of his society. Providence had made it necessary for the comfort of one dearer to me than my own life to attend church nearer to our home. The tie that bound me to this society has never been so far sundered as to deprive me of a deep and abiding interest in its welfare.

The President, in referring in fit and appropriate terms to the faithful services of Dr. Hill, spoke playfully and *feelingly* of "the rebuke of a friend, &c." It occurred to me, that, in looking over the experience of these forty years of a faithful and devoted minister, among his many sources of consolation, there might be one which was once so well expressed by the late Rev. Mr. Howe, of Hopkinton, in his famous half-century sermon. As I recollect the words, they were substantially as follows: "My hearers, during my ministry, I have had occasion to say to you many apparently severe things; but I have always had the consolation of feeling that you had the good sense to know that you deserved them." I have an abiding impression, that, unless the society of Dr. Hill has been made up of materials differing from those of religious societies generally, he might with great truth and propriety make the same statement.

In his able and interesting address, the pastor referred to the appearance of this city at the time of his settlement. It must have been about the time when the following incident occurred: A verdant young man from the south part of the county visited a friend who was in a store in Worcester; and, in the exuberance of his admiration, he shouted to his friend, "Reub, how far does this thicket of housen go?" The address to-day furnishes an answer to a question which has troubled those who cannot recall the landmarks of forty years ago.

Something has been hinted to-day about Dr. Hill being old. Now this cannot be. The answer of the blind boy, when asked how old he should think the light-hearted gentleman in whose employ he was could be, was, — "He is as old as he ever will be." So is it with Dr. Hill. He has spent his time, not so much in discussing sharp points of theology, as in presenting the beauty of goodness and of pure and undefiled religion; and he never can be old. May his shadow never be less! and may he live long to bless us by the kindness of his words, and the example of a pure and blameless life!

Mr. SALISBURY said, that, in these forty years, many members of our parish have discontinued their connection with us, from worthy motives of change of sentiment or personal convenience and duty. They went from us without breach of mutual respect and good-will, and we now welcome them on this interesting occasion.

The following letter, from His Excellency Governor BULLOCK was then read: —

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
Executive Department, Boston, March 26, 1867.

GENTLEMEN, — Please accept my sincere thanks for your kindness in sending me an invitation to attend the exercises commemorative of the fortieth anniversary of the settlement of the Rev. Dr. Hill as pastor of the Second Parish in Worcester. I should take special pleasure in being present if my daily and constant duties here would permit.

But I cannot, in justice to my personal relations with that eminent and estimable gentleman, permit your invitation to pass without special mention of the respect and honor in which it is my duty and pleasure to cherish him. As one of the kindest of pastors, always inspiring cheerfulness, courage, faith, and hope in all who have come within the lines of his official ministrations or of his social acquaintance, I beg the privilege of joining my hand to yours in greeting him at the end of these forty years of public life and labor. As a citizen of our beloved town and city, I bear a personal remembrance of him extending over twenty-five years, through which period he has been the constant friend and co-operator in every cause of education, law, and order. I do not believe that any one of us all, inside or outside of his parish, can point to an act or a word, which can be called his, that has savored of unkindness or uncharitableness towards others.

Such a duration of pastoral connection, so creditable alike to him and to his parish, is altogether uncommon in these days. Such a genial, catholic, and happy manner of bearing it is even rarer still. May it continue yet much longer!

I remain, gentlemen, with great respect and esteem,
Your fellow-townsman and friend,

ALEX. H. BULLOCK.

Messrs. F. H. KINNICUTT, T. W. HAMMOND, STEPHEN SALISBURY, Jr.

A cordial letter from Hon. B. F. THOMAS was received too late to be read; and one from Rev. Dr. HENRY W. BELLOWS, of New York, regretting that he could not be present.

Hon. EMORY WASHBURN, being invited to speak for the migrated brethren, —

Expressed his regret that, like some of the gentlemen who had preceded him, he had not been favored with a hint as to what he was expected to say. He had been called upon to answer for the emigrants from the Second Parish and the city of Worcester. And, if he was at liberty to give full utterance to the feelings which the occasion was calculated to awaken in one coming back, after a ten-years' residence elsewhere, to a place so full of pleasant associations, he should be almost willing to forgive being placed in such an embarrassing situation. It was true he had terminated his relations with that society, but it was from no want of regard for both pastor and people. It was true he had exchanged that beautiful city, as a home, for another; but it was not because he ever expected to find a better or a happier one than he had here enjoyed. And although it is now ten years since he gave up his citizenship there, he felt as if these were still his neighbors, and that he had come back to a family gathering, to every member of which he was bound by old associations and remembered kindnesses. But he could not disguise the emotions with which, as he looked around upon these familiar countenances, he looked in vain for others whose presence would have added a new zest to the pleasures of the hour. He would not, however, lose thought of how much they were permitted to enjoy in the presence of one who, after forty years of arduous labor, was now with them as fresh, and, for aught any one could see, as young, as when he had parted with him ten years ago. Others, indeed, who had preceded him, had spoken of this young man as *venerable* by age. True, his hair was once a little less frosty, and his vision less dim. And if they were to go back to the reminiscences of the past, he must ask the privilege of calling up scenes and events which go beyond the period of forty years, which had been the limit of that day's history. More than forty years ago, there came into the town, in which he then had his home, a young man, just from the University, to engage in the business of teaching. He was of rather delicate health and organization, of mild and amiable manners, and cheerful and pleasing temperament and disposition. As they happened to be of the same age, it was not surprising that there soon grew up a companionship between them which had many of the qualities of intimacy. Life was just opening to them, and, like other young men, they talked over its chances and

its prospects. There was the usual self-distrust and doubt in the mind of his young friend which of the professions he should choose; and the claims of each were brought up in these discussions. Mr. Washburn said, that, on his part, he insisted and urged that the course which his friend ought to choose was a plain one, and that the life and offices of a minister was clearly his mission.

Whether that judgment and advice had the slightest influence in determining the choice of his friend of a profession, he would not pretend to say; but standing as they did, with the experiences of forty years spread out before them, who could doubt that the choice was a wise and fortunate one? He might appeal to those he saw around him, if these forty years had not been years full of usefulness and duties done. He might ask them, if, in their hours of gladness, their pastor had not shared and added to their joy; if when the young man had wanted counsel and guidance, he had not always found him ready to act the part of a friend and adviser; and if, when pain or sorrow or affliction had visited any one of his people, he had not been ready with the offices of sympathy and kindness to lighten and alleviate it.

So far, at least, had their pastor vindicated the judgment that his mission lay in the profession he had chosen. And it was with unqualified satisfaction that he first learned that his friend had been called to this society; for he knew he could nowhere find a better or more reliable people, or a pleasanter home. And he might add, that what they saw before them that day was a living, telling monument of what pastor and people had been to each other, in the mutual regard which each had ever manifested towards the other.

Although, reckoned by the course of years, a whole generation must have passed away since this pleasant relation of pastor and people began; and although, as he looked around upon those who stood before him, he saw the young and the middle-aged in the places of those whom they were never to meet again at the festive board, — he could not, while he looked upon the familiar face of his friend and those who had been his companions in earlier life, realize that anybody had grown old. It seemed but yesterday, when, with many whom he now recognized before him, he went with that crowd of friends who so cordially welcomed to her new home the young and hopeful bride, whom they were privileged to meet there to-day, a sharer in all the pleasant associations of the hour. Nor could he, as he cast his eyes over this group before him, believe that half of twoscore years had passed away since that day, if he

had not heard that same young bride, within a few moments, address the endearing term of grand-daughter to that yonder beautiful child, who seemed to be unconsciously sharing the happiness of others around her.

Such facts as these, however, reminded him, in spite of the warm blood that he felt tingling in his veins, that years had, in fact, flown by, and that all that remained for him to add was to congratulate pastor and people that their union had been so long and so cordial. This was, indeed, a day of triumph for their pastor, in the consciousness of labor done and good accomplished. But he could not close without recurring to a remark which they had heard in the address of the day, in reference to the power and influence which the clergy of New England had ever exercised over their societies and the community. This was, in fact, a matter of history; and they all knew from tradition the awe and reverence in which the ministers of that day were held. Nor were there wanting some who affected to lament that a change in this respect had come over the people of New England. But, for himself, he doubted if there ever had been a time when faithful, devoted ministers exerted a stronger or more salutary influence than they were exerting at that very hour. It might not be in a form so palpable and imposing, but in its consequences it was as effective as it ever had been. And if he wanted proof of what he had asserted, he would appeal to the scene then before them, — an entire generation grown up under the pastoral ministrations of one man, and he yet fresh and vigorous as they had seen and heard him that day. They were there to speak for themselves; while the record of what he had done outside of the circle of his parochial duty gave evidence of the constantly widening influence of an earnest, good man upon the community around him. This anniversary was a memorable stage in the history of that society; and he could not better close the desultory thoughts to which he had been trying to give utterance, than by extending to their pastor the earnest wishes of all, that the remaining days of his ministration might be as happy as the years of his pastorate had been active and useful.

Mr. SALISBURY said: —

Our parish and its pastor have had great enjoyment, as well as instruction and strength, from the willing co-operation which has been offered by our brethren in the city of Boston.

Rev. Dr. Robbins, being invited, thus spoke in behalf of the Boston clergy: —

I am sorry, sir, as their only representative on this interesting occasion, to hear myself summoned to answer for the clergy of Boston. To *answer* for the clergy of Boston is one of the last things I would undertake to do; and I am the last person whom they would select to do it, except as to the single particular which is in question now, — their friendly interest in Brother Hill. On this point I can venture to speak with the utmost confidence; and I know, that, for the want of a better delegate, they would desire me to speak with all positiveness and cordiality. I am sure that those of their number whose presence and congratulations would have been especially gratifying to you, and were expected till the last moment, are regretting the necessity of their absence; and I am sure they would regret it all the more if they knew how much they have lost both in the church and in this delightful social gathering.

I have often heard Worcester spoken of as "the heart of the Commonwealth." What I have seen and heard here to-day of the warmth and fidelity of affection with which this congregation have cherished their faithful minister for forty years, and of the grateful esteem in which he is held by his fellow-citizens of all sects and classes, has given new significance to these words: it has convinced me that your beautiful city has more than a geographical claim to this designation. I feel, my friends, that our favored brother has indeed found his home in the heart of the Commonwealth.

I could speak of him and of your kindness to him with less reserve, if the relation that subsists between us were less intimate, if I did not almost regard myself as *one of the family.* For, in addition to the uninterrupted friendship and pleasant professional interchanges of many years, there are yet closer ties which bind us together. His son is my son, my daughter is his daughter, and that little girl of theirs, the youngest of your guests, is equally near and dear to us both. And, sir, while my eye turns in that direction, you will excuse me for reminding your pastor, that when he named, just now, the secrets of keeping the heart young, he omitted to mention one, which, if I am not mistaken, has had not a little virtue in his own case, — I mean the grandchild. It is a medicine which can be recommended with perfect confidence, and I advise all who can avail themselves of it to use it freely.

After a few words in a playful vein, the speaker closed his remarks by earnestly congratulating his friend and brother on the signal success which had crowned his labors, and expressing his deep sense of the respect which is due to a church which, in a period of general restlessness and frequent changes, has given such an impressive and affecting example of steadfastness and constancy.

Mr. SALISBURY then said: —

We have invited the clergymen of this city of all denominations to be with us at this time, not to offer them a lesson in theology, but to thank them for many instances of co-operation in good works, and to invite them to learn something from the forty years of this old parish. In the love of excitement and change which has so great influence in our country, where so many clergymen are settled on horseback, is it not wholesome to contemplate a parish that has listened gratefully and harmoniously to the instructions of its pastor for forty years? Here is *the patience, if not the faith, of the saints.* I have the pleasure to observe the presence of the clergyman second in age in this city, who is now in the twenty-ninth year of his ministration to an intelligent parish that appreciates the labors of a good scholar and devoted teacher. Some may say that his church is nearer to us in location than in opinions, but we desire no discussion of that sort at this time.

We are persuaded that Christian duty and the graces of the Christian character are more promoted by the consideration of those things in which Christians may agree than of those in which they must differ; and we are content with the fact, that our friends and we profess to stand on the same foundation, with the same purpose, and hope to arrive at the same end.

Rev. Dr. SWEETSER, of the Centre Church, rose and responded: —

Mr. PRESIDENT, — The subject on which you desire me to offer remarks is one which cannot well be handled in the few moments allowed me for addressing this audience. It is not easy to speak of long pastorates in a short time. It is greatly to the honor of this parish that they have retained the services of Dr. Hill for so long a period. It is an uncommon occurrence that two successive pastorates should reach so great a length. Dr. Bancroft, the first minister of the parish, held his office more than fifty years. This

is longer than any clergyman has held his office in Worcester since its settlement. Dr. Hill, having preached to this society forty years, comes next in order. The only other clergyman who has reached a term of service nearly equal in length is Rev. Mr. Maccarty of the First Church, whose pastorate fell short of that of your present minister by three years. It is certainly worthy of notice, that, in the eighty-two years of the existence of the Second Parish, it has had but two ministers. There is, I apprehend, some tendency to entertain an incorrect opinion upon the subject of the length of service in the ministerial office. The idea prevails, to some extent, that the office is now much more unstable than formerly. But the fact is, that long and short pastorates have always occurred, both in the good old times and in our day: many instances within our own knowledge readily come to mind. You have at your right hand, sir, a gentleman (Dr. Allen of Northboro') who has been sustained in the same parish more than half a century. The same was true of Dr. Thayer of Lancaster. Other instances have also occurred, as you know, sir. This county has been somewhat remarkable for the length of the pastorates of its ministers. In four towns, very near to each other, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Brookfield, and Leicester, there have been four ministers who, during the time of my residence in Worcester, have completed their half-century. Three of them have deceased; one, Rev. Dr. Nelson, still remains, and has continued to discharge in part his pulpit duties. To these, other names might be added. We of this day ought not to be too severe in the censure we pass upon the character of the ministry of our times. It is true there are many changes occurring, and ministers are apt to move from one place to another; but it has always been so, although not perhaps to quite so great a degree. These frequent changes are an evil. They are bad for the parishes. They are bad for the ministers. The continuance of a minister in the same place for a series of years is a great benefit. The power he exercises is cumulative. He gains an influence such as he can derive from no other source. Neither learning nor eloquence in preaching will give him the position acquired by protracted service. It is a great thing for a parish to enjoy year after year the teachings of the same pastor. It is a privilege to a people to grow up around their minister, to have the same familiar countenance and the same familiar voice in the pulpit. The effect is very great, when, from childhood to manhood, one only is known and looked up to as pastor. I myself have enjoyed that privilege, being allowed

now the friendship of the pastor under whose counsels I sat when a youth. He is still continued beyond his half-century of service, and to this day I love and revere him as I do no other man. Sir, it is greatly to the credit of this parish, and should be held as an eminent distinction, that they have so long retained in their pulpit their present minister.

Rev. Mr. RICHARDSON, of the Salem-street Church, being invited, spoke for the young men: —

Mr. PRESIDENT, — I suppose you expect me to speak for the young, since the old folks have had their share of attention. And, in view of the example before us, I would exhort the young men here to be ministers.

Dr. Hill, in his discourse, spoke of the severity of a clergyman's labors, and his numerous trials. But here he is before us, healthy and happy, wearing no marks of too heavy burdens, after preaching forty years. No profession or work of life is easy; but the ministry is not harder than other professions. If it has its trials, so has it its joys.

True, you cannot make money by preaching; but the faithful minister will be supported, while he is exempt from the perplexities of business life. Is it so great a blessing to make money? We want rich men. But worse than poverty is the lot of one who has so much wealth that it takes all his thought and time to see to it.

Looking to the "venerable" minister before us (feeling so young that he almost resents the idea of "old"), surrounded by a loving people, blessed with children and grandchildren, we might pronounce him the happiest man present. Imitate his example; choose the ministry for your profession, be faithful in it, and you shall be blessed. And, if you cannot have great wealth, you can do as he did, select one of the finest ladies for a wife, and, after forty years of labor, have a grand celebration, with grandchildren rising up to call you blessed.

Rev. WILLIAM R. HUNTINGTON, rector of All-Saints' Church, was called on to respond for "the middle-aged men." He spoke substantially as follows: —

No clergyman, Mr. President, ever received a more unexpected "call." Certainly, I never did. I have observed that several of

the gentlemen who have addressed us so admirably have been provided with handy little slips of paper, very like memoranda, while others have spoken of certain hints given and received. Now, sir, I have neither a slip of paper, nor have I had the hint; so you must pardon me if I fail to do what might be wished. Then, you know, there is an old stigma that attaches to the clergy of our Communion (dating back, as my clerical friends will remember, to the English Reformation), to the effect that we are "dumb dogs," which, in itself, is an apology. Moreover, standing here on the outside of that magic line, the table, I felt comparatively secure. But it seems that the old theological maxim still holds good: *Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*, "There is no safety out of the pale." Since, for all these reasons, I am manifestly excused from making a speech, I will do what, according to the old game of forfeits, is the next best thing, — tell a story.

In congratulating your pastor, just now, upon this happy anniversary, I took the liberty of saying, "I count myself to-day, sir, one of your parishioners." The story is to give you my warrant for saying this. I was on my way, one afternoon last autumn, to make a pastoral visit at the house of a person in deep affliction. On my way I happened to meet Dr. Hill, and, as we walked along together, it came out that we were going to the same place. Thereupon my companion, as if by way of apology for seeming to trespass upon another's parochial limits, said, "When you have lived in this town, sir, as long as I have, you will feel that, in some sense, all the people in it are your parishioners." I shall not easily forget those words. They made their impression; and they were my warrant for saying to our honored friend just now, "I count myself, to-day, one of your parishioners." I am sure, Mr. President, that when a minister, after his forty or more years of service, feels in this way towards the people of the place where he has lived, the people of the place reciprocate the feeling. The older he grows, the more they value and respect him; applying to him, as they see him pass, the opening words of the most beautiful of Shakspeare's sonnets, with the change of but one little word:—

"To *us*, dear friend, you never can be old."

Remarks followed from Rev. Mr. GREEN of Leominster, and Rev. Mr. BARBER of Harvard.

Rev. Mr. BOWLES, of the Universalist Church in Worcester, answered the call of the Chairman as follows: —

Mr. President, and Ladies and Gentlemen, — I deem myself deeply indebted for the privilege of being present on this happy and interesting occasion. Unfortunate in having received no intimation that I should be called upon to speak, and so in being unprepared suitably to respond, in the opportunity furnished for obtaining information, being a comparative stranger in Worcester, I am perhaps more highly favored than any person present.

When I visited Worcester last summer, I used the Yankee's privilege of looking, listening, and asking questions. Especially I inquired of your public institutions and your public men, and more especially of your clergymen. And when I learned that he whose fortieth anniversary we celebrate had labored here so long and so acceptably, I was eager to learn, by authentic information or personal observation and knowledge of the man, the secret of his success. Called in the autumn to live and labor here myself, desire to know of the place and the people was renewed and increased; and during a residence of six months I have tried to learn as much as I might. And now, except that through modesty it might impose pain upon one who should be only happy to-day, it would give me great pleasure to report many things I have heard of Dr. Hill and his long pastorate; but I must content myself with saying that so far I have heard no evil of him: the testimony has been all one way. And listening to the very interesting and instructive sermon just preached has given me great satisfaction. In this I am sure I have found a part of the secret of the preacher's prolonged prosperity as the pastor of this people. The sermon in its historic revelations has plainly shown that its author, through all this forty years, has kept his eyes and ears open to passing events; reverently seeing and hearing in these what God would have him do in each hour, as it came to him through the changing scenes and conditions of this long period; thankful for the past, hopeful for the future, yet faithful to the present. He seems not to have asked, "To what did God call me in some former hour of ministry?" but, "To what does God call me now?" The preacher for this occasion has well said that no profession imposes more arduous, difficult, or responsible duties than that of the ministry. To him who has displaced all fear of man or any form of adversity by faith in God, it is easy to perform duty where it is plain; but to see our duty, just what the right requires of us, is sometimes hard. This sermon has shown, some of you have seen, and to-day we celebrate, eminent success in

both seeing and performing the important duties of the Christian ministry.

Moreover, this sermon, you all say, and the life and labor it records, have revealed a remarkable love toward God and man, — reverence for the beneficent Father, and regard for his children. And who with a heart full of these could fail?

Allusion has been made by one before me to the quality of preaching, and especially to the way by which some men, when on exchange, preach "great sermons." Now, claiming to preach none of that sort, yet desiring always to preach as well as possible, and especially to strangers, when I exchange, peculiar occasions or conditions excepted, I always preach the last sermons prepared, for they lie nearest my heart. And, from what I have heard, I feel confident that our honored friend and father here approves that, and has been these forty years preaching sermons that lay near his heart, — a heart ever warm by its nearness to God. And I congratulate this "heart of the Commonwealth," on having so long had a heart so full of good preaching, and, I am sure, good practice in its midst. And no less do I congratulate him, whose fidelity and good fortune have called us together, on having been so constantly helped of God and good friends to this day. And I thank you, Mr. President, for the privilege of saying so.

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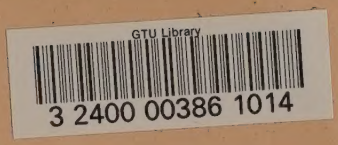

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